Call for abstracts

The Age Structure of Urban Populations

Segregation, Inequalities and Intergenerational Relations

Organised by the DIAMETROIT FIS Project – Diachronic Analysis of Social Structure in Italian Metropolitan Areas

Conference	Venue	Abstract deadline
9 February 2027	**University of Genoa**	**30 November 2026**
In person only	Albergo dei Poveri	Max 500 words, in English

Background

Cities are constantly reshaped by demographic change, residential mobility, housing dynamics and the unequal distribution of resources. Age plays a key role in these processes, as residential needs, mobility patterns and access to services vary across the life course. In Southern European cities, and in Italy in particular, this raises a puzzle. Low residential mobility, widespread homeownership and strong family ties should keep generations close to one another. Yet young adults seem increasingly pushed out of central neighbourhoods, while older residents tend to age in place.

> ***Is the resulting spatial separation of age groups the imprint of the life course on urban space, or does it reflect and reinforce new lines of inequality, structured by cities, both between and within generations?***

Age, cohort and life-course stage are related but distinct: a neighbourhood's age profile may reflect people moving through different life stages, or cohorts that entered the housing market under very different conditions. Recognising the distinction between age from cohort effects, and considering their relationship, is therefore central to understanding change over time. Likewise, "generation" may refer to historical cohorts or family lineages, and "intergenerational relations" may refer to contact between strangers in public space or to family proximity and care, the latter being especially relevant in Southern Europe.

Age-based residential patterns are closely tied to neighbourhood change, housing constraints and social stratification. Housing affordability, tenure, socioeconomic resources and the intergenerational transmission of wealth shape residential opportunities differently across age groups and social positions, so people of the same age do not necessarily share similar conditions. Looking beyond residential segregation to the accessibility of urban amenities, and to the conditions that enable or constrain contact between age groups, offers a promising perspective on the role of age in urban transformation.

A diachronic perspective is essential to this agenda. How the age structure of cities changes over time, and how these changes depend on the indices, units and spatial scales used to measure them, remain open questions. The conference aims to bring together contributions on how age structures urban space over time, and how these configurations intersect with socioeconomic inequalities, housing dynamics, access to services and opportunities for intergenerational contact across diverse urban contexts.

Aims of the Call

We invite scholars from diverse disciplines and career stages to submit empirical, methodological and theoretically informed contributions addressing one or more of the following axes:

- **Measuring age segregation:** indices, spatial scales, grids and data sources (censuses, registers, longitudinal data).

Iniziativa finanziata dal Fondo Italiano per la Scienza, Bando 2. Progetto DIAMETROIT "Diachronic analysis of social structure in Italian Metropolitan Areas: a comparative-historical research and open access database for urban studies", CUP D53C24005530001, Codice progetto FIS-2023-01328

- **Mechanisms:** housing markets and tenure, wealth transmission, residential mobility over the life course, cohort effects, ageing in place, studentification and touristification.
- **Consequences:** access to services, infrastructures and public space; opportunities for intergenerational contact; family proximity and care.
- **Comparison over time and space:** across cities, housing systems and welfare regimes.
- **Policies and governance:** housing and planning policies, age-friendly and child-friendly initiatives, and their intended and unintended effects on age-based segregation.

While the primary focus is on European cities, contributions addressing urban contexts beyond Europe are also welcome.

Submission Guidelines

Abstracts should be **no longer than 500 words** (references excluded) and **written in English**. Please send your abstract to **diametroit@gmail.com** by **30 November 2026**. The organisers intend to explore a special issue in a peer-reviewed journal based on selected contributions. Participants will also have the opportunity to discuss their work with members of the project's Advisory Board.

Important Dates

30 November
2026

Abstract submission deadline

Authors are invited to submit an abstract (no longer than 500 words) by this date.

5 December
2026

Notification of acceptance

Authors will be informed whether their contribution has been accepted or declined.

15 December
2026

Confirmation of participation

Accepted authors must confirm their participation in the conference.

Event Information

The conference will be held **in person only** on **9 February 2027** at the University of Genoa, Albergo dei Poveri, Piazzale Emanuele Brignole 2, 16125 Genova. Each presentation will last approximately 15 minutes. Participation is free of charge for selected contributors, and lunch and coffee breaks will be provided. Travel expenses will not be reimbursed. Keynote speakers will be announced soon. Please note that the Organising Committee will not be able to issue invitation letters for visa purposes.

The Project

The DIAMETROIT Project, funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR) under the FIS scheme, is a three-year research initiative dedicated to the diachronic analysis of social structures in Italian metropolitan areas, with the aim of developing a comparative framework and an open-access database for urban studies. The project benefits from the scientific guidance of an Italian and international Advisory Board bringing together expertise in sociology, demography, social geography, and urban and housing studies: **Alberta Andreotti, Federico Benassi, Thomas Maloutas, Robert Musil, Marco Oberti, Jonathan Pratschke and Tommaso Vitale**. More information is available on the project website: **sites.google.com/view/diametroit**.

Contact

For abstract submission and further information, please contact:

diametroit@gmail.com

Organising committee

Lorenzo Barbanera
Igor Costarelli
Antonio De Falco
Federica Floridi
Giuliana La Mantia
Niccolò Morelli
Giulia Schiavoni
Giorgia Scognamiglio
Francesca Zangani

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